

The Doctor bit into a bar from the food machine, his mouth already salivating at the thought of roast Ha'harn, basted in its own juices and stuffed with vine leaves. "Phagh!" He spat the disgusting crumbs all over the TARDIS console, desperately wiping his mouth clean with the sleeve of his coat of many colours. Desperately he checked the settings on the machine, flicking through panel after panel. Then he slumped. Striving for a reasonable tone of voice he called out. "Oh, Melanie."

There was a pause before his young companion appeared in the doorway, continuing the skipping that had covered miles of the TARDIS corridors in the last few days. Sweat soaked the top of her purple leotard and the green headband that kept her bouncing curls restrained. She was counting under her breath. "What is it, Doctor? I'm half way through my ten thousand."

"Mel," he asked in honeyed tones, "have you been fiddling with the food machine?"

She beamed happily at him. "I certainly have, Doc. A full reprogramming. From now on it's the wholesome natural taste of nature's bounty for both of us." She narrowed her eyes slightly as the suspicion dawned that the Doctor might not be completely happy with her improvements.

"You've singlehandedly wiped out three hundred and six of the finest cuisines in the galaxy! Core dump! Gone forever!"

"Whoops," giggled Mel, eyeing the fuming Timelord warily.

The Doctor edged slowly around the console, his eyes fixed on hers. "I \*did\* ask you to consult with me before you made any 'improvements', did I not?"

"But it seemed so straightforward! Anyhow, can't stop, Doc - lots more exercise to do." The Doctor made a lunge for his bouncing Nemesis, but with a shrill scream of alarm Mel dropped the skipping rope and sprinted into the corridor. By the time the Doctor had untangled one foot from the rope she had a good head start, her flashing rump disappearing around the first bend.

"Run all you like," muttered the Doctor, "I know the TARDIS like I know my own hand." He checked his hand carefully and nodded with satisfaction before he took off after his fleeing companion, at a steady jog.

Forty minutes later and he was wheezing for breath, leaning against the pseudo-brick wall of the basketball court. It seemed Mel had learnt a lot about the layout of the TARDIS in the few weeks she'd spent on board. Of course, having a photographic memory probably helped as well. He thought he'd had her in the cloister, but she'd ducked into an alcove that even he'd forgotten, slipping her svelte form through a narrow gap that took him a good few seconds to squeeze past.

What was that? The Doctor manfully resisted the need to pant for breath, and dived behind one of the piles of old car tyres that littered the place. Footsteps. Coming closer. He carefully peered between two whitewalls.

Mel tripped lightly into view, casting the occasional amused glance back over her shoulder. He was irritated to see that she didn't appear particularly fatigued, though the sweat stains on her leotard were larger than previously. Hearing no pursuit she halted to retie the laces of her shocking pink training shoes, and readjust her stripy leggings. As she bent over the Doctor got a close-up view of her pert buttocks and the lycra that was tautly stretched over them. An idea came to him instantly. He leapt from concealment and seized Mel around the waist. Her piercing scream of mingled surprise and shock almost made him drop her again, but gritting his teeth

he dragged her over his knee and proceeded to wallop that inviting behind.

"Doctor! Ow! You scared the... ow... life out of me. Yow!" Mel's headband slipped off as she flinched with each blow, and her freed hair ballooned out, forcing the Doctor to peer through a red curtain at her struggling form.

"I. Will. Not. Have. Any. One. Alter. The. TARDIS. Machines. Without. Supervision," he almost shouted, punctuating each word with the smack of his palm on Mel's rounded derriere. After he ran out of complaints he noticed that Mel was no longer squealing at each blow, but was simply shuddering on his lap. Instantly he stopped. Had he gone too far? Was she hurt? Carefully he lifted her to her feet, peering anxiously at her face through the disarray of her ginger mane. She was struggling to stop laughing!

"Sorry about all that, Doc. It was the only way I could think of to get you doing some exercise!"

"You mean..?"

"Oh, the food machine's fine. I downloaded all the old menus before I scrubbed the core." Mel reached into the small pocket at the rear of her leotard. "They're all on this wafer - oh!"

Mel looked gingerly down at the broken sliver of plastic and metal. "Well how was I to know? Doctor? What are you doing? Oh, no! Please, not again!" The sound of spanking and the squeals of the victim once more echoed through the infinities of the TARDIS.